



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 05/07/2024

ITEM NO: 15

ADDENDUM

DATE: May 6, 2024
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Authorize the Town Manager to Execute an Agreement for Services with the Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce to Manage the Los Gatos Visitors Information Center and the Visit Los Gatos Website, Social Media and Destination Marketing Services for FY 2024/2025, in an amount not to exceed \$55,000

REMARKS:

Attachment 2 contains public comment received after 11:00 a.m. on Friday, May 3, 2024, and before 11:00 a.m. on Monday, May 6, 2024.

Attachment previously received with the staff report:

1. Draft Agreement for Services with Exhibit A, Scope of Services, with the Chamber of Commerce for FY 2024/25

Attachment received with this Addendum:

2. Public comment received after 11:00 a.m. on Friday, May 3, 2024, and before 11:00 a.m. Monday, May 6, 2024.

PREPARED BY: Jenna De Long
Deputy Town Clerk



Memo To: Town of Los Gatos Staff and Town Council

From: Jennifer Lin, Executive Director, LGCC
Rachael Brown, President LGCC Board of Directors

Subject: Year End Report
\$88K for Los Gatos Visitor Information Center, Visit Los Gatos Website,
Social Media and Destination Marketing Services

Date: May 3, 2024

The Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce is an independent contractor that is paid a fee for service by the Town of Los Gatos. This memo details the ways in which the Chamber has fulfilled the scope of services outlined in the Town's Agreement with the Los Gatos Visitor and Information Center.

Below is the primary purpose of the Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce:

Our Mission: The Los Gatos Chamber serves the community first and foremost by being a catalyst for business growth and success; acting as a convener of community leaders and influencers to get things done; and serving as a champion for a thriving business community.

Our Vision: The Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce will be a strong, unified voice of the spirited Los Gatos business community... recognized as a catalyst for business growth and advocacy. Being a champion for the town of Los Gatos, the Chamber will work to preserve the cherished quality of life and integrity in our town ... and will be admired for its skill in listening to the concerns of all segments of the community and acting as a convener of all for dialogue and for problem solving.

As a courtesy, and as agreed upon by both parties, the Town has an agreement with the Chamber to manage the Town's Visitor and Information Center. This agreement has been in place off and on for the past 24 years.

In 2001, the Town Council approved just over \$100,000 for services provided by the Chamber of Commerce. Over the years, that amount has decreased significantly, while the Chamber of Commerce's services have expanded and its costs of doing business have also significantly increased.

From 2019 through June 2023, the Chamber has received approximately \$55K. For 2023-2024, the amount was increased to \$88K.

Please note that the Chamber has met and/or exceeded all expectations of previous agreements. Below is what the Chamber provided under the 2023-2024 agreement:

Los Gatos Visitor Information Center, Visit Los Gatos Website, Social Media, and Destination Marketing at \$88k

Town of Los Gatos Visitor Information Center: The Visitor Information Center is located within the Chamber office in prime downtown real estate, easily accessible to visitors and is open year-round, Tuesday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and also by appointment, excepting scheduled holidays. As of early April 2024, the Chamber began a pilot program to be open on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. We currently operate the only permanent Town public restroom.

We act as the concierge service for our Town's guests, providing information and resources regarding community events, shopping, dining, lodging, parks and recreation, event spaces, transit, services, relocation, general commerce, and other related visitor information topics. We also offer souvenirs for purchase as a service to visitors. We pride ourselves on providing high-touch customer service and consistently receive positive feedback from our visitors. Additionally, as a service to visitors, the Town Information Center sells Los Gatos related merchandise.

On average, we receive 5 out-of-town guests per day and a handful of our locals who stop by for information and resources. We also respond to 7-10 phone calls and 10 digital requests (email, social media) daily from people seeking Visitor or Town information.

As part of the Visitor Information Center distributes and promotes resources and events from the Town as well its core partners, including but not limited to the Los Gatos - Monte Sereno Police Department, NUMU, the Los Gatos Library, LGS Recreation materials). We also work with the Town to fulfill requests for relocation resources from people looking to move or start a business in Los Gatos. We send all requested materials free of charge via USPS.

During the term of this annual contract, the Chamber paid rent in the amount \$17,820 for the Town's Visitor and Information Center space which includes the public restroom and use of the conference room. The Chamber also paid general office/operations expenses related to the Visitor Information Center in the amount of \$30,057. Finally, the Chamber paid \$60,012 in staffing expenses as it related to visitor services, social media, and destination marketing. **The total Visitor Information Center, social media, and Destination Marketing expense to the Chamber in 2023-2024 was \$107,889.**

Visit Los Gatos Website: The Chamber and its new staff continued to maintain an accessible, updated, easy-to-navigate Visit Los Gatos Website. The branded site successfully appeared in keyword searches as a top option.

Destination Marketing and Social Media: This past year, the Chamber and its new staff implemented a multi-prong Destination Marketing program to attract visitors to Los Gatos, which included the following strategies: social media, a print and digital Los Gatos Destination Guide, a new and welcoming "You Belong in Los Gatos" street pole banner series, and the production and marketing of major events that entice visitors with unique experiences.

Following the 100% Chamber staff turnover in June 2023, the Chamber hired a temporary resource **dedicated to Visit Los Gatos social media** and provided 5 posts per week through September 2023. We then recruited and subsequently hired a permanent Social Media Coordinator in October 2023.

From October 2023 through March 2024, the Chamber focused on evaluation, analysis, and clean-up of our social media accounts. We discovered that the Visit Los Gatos Instagram account had far too many paid followers across distant/international cities as compared to organic followers from more local communities like Marin or Walnut Creek (who are more likely to become day or weekend visitors). This negatively affected our ability to reach our desired

targets because Instagram's algorithm prioritizes regional commonalities among followers and target audiences.

With the goal of improving reach, we spent considerable time deleting purchased followers and also unfollowing irrelevant social media accounts. In 2024-2025 we will continue optimizing followed accounts and followers as well as improve engagement through more dynamic (e.g., video) content and partnerships with photographers/content creators/ influencers. Research has shown that social media posts must entertain, inspire, and elicit emotion to attract and engage new organic followers.

In addition to Social Media, the Chamber invested significant time and resources into the kickoff of a standalone **Los Gatos Destination Guide** that includes a professionally published print guide as well as a robust digital guide with live links and dynamic content. This project has a target publish date of late August 2024. With continued Town support at the \$88,000 level, we can place the print guide and cards with QR code linked to the digital guide at San Jose International Airport, local Los Gatos hotels, and potentially other area Visitor and Welcome Centers in Northern California.

The Chamber has been hard at work on a **new street pole banner series called "You Belong in Los Gatos."** The cost of this project is to be partially covered by a Town Community Grant. These banners help the Town to promote Los Gatos as a welcoming, safe, and inclusive community to visitors and strengthen the brand of Los Gatos as both a sought-after destination and a place you are proud to call home. Target installation is late June, 2024.

Utilizing our major event portfolio, the Chamber developed and **marketed unique experiences** to attract visitors from all over the Bay Area. We added the Kid + Pet Halloween Costume PAW-Looza and a Valentine's themed Sweetheart Stroll this year. With our Food & Wine Group, we are working on a new Summer 204 series to draw visitors downtown on lively Thursday nights and will also partner with the Los Gatos - Monte Sereno Police Foundation to produce a "Taste of Los Gatos" street festival in September 2024 where attendees can experience bites and drinks from our Town's establishments. In April 2024 we launched a new VIP Experience as part of our Wine Walks, with the goal of cementing Los Gatos' reputation as host of one of the Bay Area's premier wine tasting events.

Finally, due to our carriage vendor ending its horse-drawn carriage ride partnership with the Chamber, we have reimagined a robust new Holiday program for December 2024 that is sure to attract and engage visitors. The carriage ride program was unfortunately an expensive and exclusive event, so instead we have planned a highly welcoming, accessible and inclusive

program. For the Holiday we will offer a hop-on, hop-off cable-car style trolley that will transport riders around downtown Los Gatos and offer a delightful, unique experience. We will also offer visits with Santa in a special pavilion in Town Plaza Park. If we receive a renewed contract at the \$88,000 level, we intend to offer this holiday program free to residents and visitors.

Other Marketing Efforts in 2023-24:

- Los Gatos Loyal Card (support local program) offering perks, promotions and discounts for residents AND visitors
- Advertising and editorial content in local newspapers/magazines including Los Gatos Magazine, Los Gatos Weekly, San Jose Mercury News
- New Los Gatos Town Map in Fall 2024 (produced and maintained by the LGCC)
- Los Gatos Self-Guided Walking Tours – Discover Los Gatos (funded by LGCC)
- Los Gatos Event Venue Guide (produced and maintained electronically by the LGCC)
- Los Gatos Creek Trail, Lexington, Vasona, Villa Montalvo, and other informational brochures
- Santa Cruz Mountain winery maps/ Santa Clara winery maps/Livermore winery maps
- Community-wide events posted in our front windows, newsletter, and website
- Weekly Town-wide e-newsletter
- Timely updates to our Chamber and Visit Los Gatos websites and the Community Calendar
- Host and manage all Visit Los Gatos social media platforms for destination marketing including Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor and LinkedIn
- Support for DEI messaging, programs and events to benefit the whole community to make Los Gatos more welcoming and inclusive
- Summer Event Guide (produced in partnership with Los Gatos Music and Arts)
- Promotional posters and banners for the town promoting events and other happenings
- Host monthly Food and Wine meetings
- Host quarterly Merchant Meetings
- Host periodic service organization meetings and service provider meetings